

REMARKS:

Careful consideration has been given to the Official Action of July 16, 2003 and reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has objected to claims 16-18 and 20 because "the stop-forming" conical support faces (21 and 25) recited in claim 16 did not appear to have an antecedent basis. Claim 15 has been amended to provide antecedent support for the stop-forming conical support faces thereby to overcome the Examiner's objection.

The Examiner has also objected to claim 20 because it appears that claim 20 should depend from claim 19 in order to provide proper antecedent basis. Accordingly, claim 20 has been amended to depend from claim 19 to overcome the Examiner's objection.

The Examiner has rejected claims 15, 16, 18, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Watts et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 2,766,998). Claims 15-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Galle (U.S. Pat. No. 5,570,911) in view of Watts et al..

Claim 17 as previously presented is distinguishable from the cited art as will be explained in detail later. Claim 15 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 16 and 17. Claim 18 has been amended to depend directly from claim 15. Claim 15 as now presented represents claim 17 in independent form. The remaining claims have all been previously presented and are dependent from claim 15. By virtue of the action taken, it is respectfully submitted that the claims as now presented would not require a further consideration and/or search to justify refusal of entry of the amendment.

The essential distinguishing characteristic of the present invention is that the sealing arrangement comprises a radially facing, cylindrical, outermost lying support face 22 to

provide a continuous gliding support for the support face 14a of the stem 14 directly against the outermost lying support face 22.

Watts et al. disclose a sealing arrangement comprising a first armature member 18 having interior threads 20 to threadably engage a second armature member 28 having exterior threads and a metal sealing ring having exterior threads 26 as illustrated in the figures. The first armature member 18 also comprises an enlarged, unthreaded chamber 22 in which the sealing ring is preliminarily received and maintained. (Column 4, lines 45-47 and lines 51-53). Hence, in order to complete the sealing arrangement, the sealing ring is first threaded through the threads 20 until it is introduced with clearance into the enlarged, unthreaded chamber 22. Then the second armature member 28 is threadably advanced towards the sealing ring to urge the stem 24 of the sealing ring towards the first armature member 18.

It should be noted that the "unthreaded chamber 22 is of width somewhat greater than the width of the rib 24" to retain the sealing ring in the enlarged, unthreaded chamber 22. In fact, there is a clearance between the threaded exterior 26 of the sealing ring and the enlarged, unthreaded chamber 22. This is clearly illustrated in the figures and can be readily observed, for example, in Fig. 3 and Fig. 10. The clearance between the sealing ring and the enlarged unthreaded chamber is disadvantageous because it allows the possibility of a misalignment between the first and second armature members and the metal sealing ring, whereby the sealing ring may be deformed and damaged by the armature members.

In contrast with Watts et al., Galle reduces the possibility of the misalignment between the first and second armature members and the sealing ring by providing a retainer 47 with several inner tabs 55 on its inner diameter, each of which is connected to a respective slot 53 of the sealing ring 45 to retain the sealing ring 45 in a preconnection position.

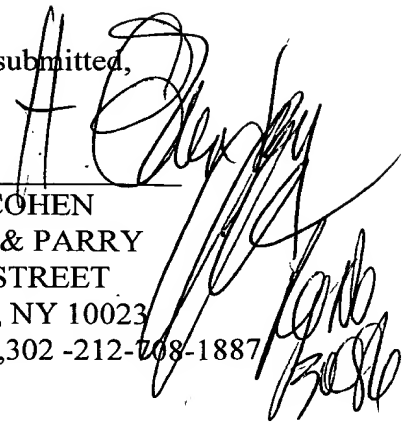
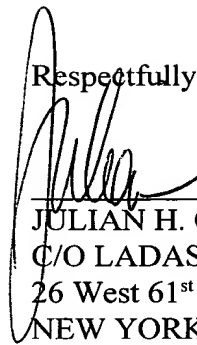
(Column 2, lines 58-61) Consequently, there is no relative movement between the sealing ring and the first armature member 11 as the second armature member 13 is guided into position to complete the sealing arrangement.

In rejecting claim 17, the Examiner contends that Galle discloses a sealing arrangement having a stem provided with a gliding and support face 57 that is supported against a counter face 41. However, applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner since support face 57 is part of the retainer that secures the sealing ring to the first armature member in a fixed preconnection position. Hence, there is no gliding as the second armature member 13 is guided into position to complete the sealing arrangement. As is illustrated in Figs. 4 and 5, the sealing ring is secured to the first armature member 11 in the preconnection position by the retainer 47 as the second armature member 13 is guided into position.

Claim 15 as now amended recites a sealing arrangement comprising an outermost lying support face 22 being arranged to provide a continuous gliding support for the support face 14a of the stem 14 directly against the outermost lying face 22. This configuration is clearly distinguished from the cited art where Watts et al. show a clearance between the threads on the sealing ring and the opposed surface of the armature member and Galle fixes the outer edge of the sealing ring to the surrounding armature member. Therefore, the claims as now presented are clearly distinguishable from the cited art.

On the basis of the above action and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in allowable condition and favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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